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East Side Housing Opportunity Program interim report

Results for the 2009-2010 school year



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Prepared by:

Amy Leite

Wilder Research

451 Lexington Parkway North

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104

651-280-2700

www.wilderresearch.org

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Program information.....	1
Program goals	1
Student success	3
Student attendance	3
Academic achievement	4
Issues for consideration.....	5

Figures

1. Attendance for students served by EHOP.....	3
2. HTF student attendance between October 2009 and May 2010	4
3. Reading level (Wright Group McGraw Hill assessment).....	4

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Introduction

Program information

The East Side Housing Opportunity Program (EHOP) takes a community-wide approach to increasing housing stability. A venture of the East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC), the program works to demonstrate that neighborhoods, foundations, landlords, schools, businesses, government, private investors, and non-profit developers and service organizations can work together to create family and neighborhood stability and vitality (ESNDC website). The program is part of the East Side Family Center (ESFC), which is operated by the ESNDC. It is housed at John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary School with the primary goal of increasing the number of students who stay at Johnson throughout the school year and from year to year.

Program services include case management and housing placement for families with children at Johnson Elementary School. Program staff help families find and maintain decent, safe, and affordable rental and owner-occupied housing. Staff also provide supportive services, resources, and referrals for a variety of issues that may pose challenges to self-reliance, addressing employment, mental health, transportation, child care, school attendance, and other concerns faced by clients. The program's Life Skills Education Program provides Johnson and other neighborhood families with training aimed at strengthening families and providing them with tools for stabilizing their housing situation. In working toward its goals, the program partners with school staff, neighbors, landlords, and community agencies.

Program goals

The EHOP advisory committee considered recommendations from the 2008 evaluation report and established the following goals for 2009 – 2012. This report focuses on EHOP services during the 2009 calendar year, and explores progress toward goals identified by the EHOP Advisory Committee.

Goals for 2009

- Increase the income of 50 percent of HTF clients through stabilized employment or access to public benefits.
- Half of HTF clients report accessing community resources and advocate for themselves without the assistance of EHOP staff.

- Half of the younger children participating in EHOP are enrolled in a formal early childhood program.
- Three-quarters (75%) of school-aged children in HTF show improved attendance and academics.

Long-term goal

- Increase student stability at John A. Johnson Elementary to 90 percent, the goal of the Saint Paul Public School District.

This report summarizes progress toward one annual goal focused on student achievement and attendance for the 2009-2010 school year. The next full evaluation report describing progress toward each identified program goal will be released in September 2011.

Student success

Student attendance

One of the program goals established for 2009-2012 stated that three-quarters (75%) of school-aged children in HTF show improved attendance and academics. As of the end of the 2009-2010 school year, 16 children whose families participated in EHOP and HTF were enrolled at John A. Johnson Elementary School. Children were enrolled in kindergarten through 5th grade.

Student attendance is tracked by EHOP program staff. HTF students' attendance has improved between the 2008-2009 and 2009-10 school years. Students experienced fewer tardies between May 2009 and 2010, and fewer unexcused absences. Students did experience more excused absences in 2010 than in 2008-09 (Figure 1).

Most students experienced a decline in student attendance between October 2009 and June 2010 (Figure 1). Children missed between zero and eight days of school in October 2009, between zero and 16 days of school in January, between zero and 21 days in March, and between one and 29 days of school in May 2010. On average, children missed two days of school in October, nearly four days of school in January, five days of school in March, and nearly seven days of school in May.

1. Attendance for students served by EHOP (N=15-16)

	October 2008	January 2009	May 2009	October 2009	January 2010	March 2010	May 2010
Tardy (to class and school) ^a	55	120	177	26	60	95	122
Excused absences ^b	6	6	17	25	49	62	83
Unexcused absences ^b	8	51	49	3	11	18	26
Suspended ^a	-	-	-	2	2	2	2

Source: John A. Johnson attendance records.

^a Total number of times for the 15 (2008-09) and 16 (2009-2010) children as a group.

^b Total number of days for the 15 (2008-09) and 16 (2009-2010) children as a group.

Figure 2 identifies the number of students whose attendance improved, declined, or stayed the same during between October 2009 and May 2010. Most students (81%) were tardy to either school or class more frequently in May 2010 than October 2009, and many (63%) had more excused absences. Families have not met the goal of improving attendance for 75 percent of HTF families.

2. HTF student attendance between October 2009 and May 2010 (N=16)

	# students whose attendance improved/no absences recorded	# students whose attendance stayed the same	# students whose attendance declined
Tardy	2	1	13
Excused absences	2	4	10
Unexcused absences	9	-	7

Academic achievement

In addition to student attendance, EHOP program staff also track academic achievement of students whose families are enrolled in EHOP and the Housing Trust Fund. Three HTF students are receiving Special Education Services and have Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Fourteen students demonstrated improvement on a standardized reading or letter naming assessment from October 2009 to June 2010 (Figure 3). This met the goal of 75 percent of HTF students improving their academic performance.

3. Reading level (Wright Group McGraw Hill assessment) (N=13)

	October 2009	January 2010	March 2010	June 2010
At grade level	1	4	4	6
One grade or less delayed	6	5	5	4
Two or more grade levels delayed	6	4	4	3

Source: John A. Johnson attendance records.

Note: Three students were in Kindergarten and assessed using a different scale; unable to determine reading level using this assessment.

Students made considerable gains in their reading scores during the 2009-10 school year. At the beginning of the school year, one of 13 HTF students was reading at his/her grade level. At the end of the school year, six students were at or above the standardized score for their grade level, four students were one grade or less behind, and three students were

2 or more grades behind. Reading scores for students in 1st – 5th grade are assessed by the Wright Group McGraw Hill reading assessment.

Three students enrolled in kindergarten were assessed using a letter naming tool. At the start of the school year, the students could name between two and 16 letters. At the end of the school year, students could name between 22 and 26 letters.

Issues for consideration

Improving child attendance and academic achievement is a goal for this program year. While academic achievement of children enrolled in EHOP did improve, attendance declined during the 2009-2010 school year. Program staff should explore barriers to children attending school on a regular basis and should work with families to ensure that children have the opportunity to attend school.